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The Attitude of the New Administration.

The announcement by President Wilson and Secretary of State Bryan of the attitude of the new Administration on international affairs has caused no surprise. It is what was to have been expected, in view of the conspicuous utterances of the two men in former years.

Acting in the spirit of genuine respect for other nations and their rights and institutions, of cordial friendly co-operation with them, of good-will and brotherliness, the Administration will, we are confident, do everything in its power to promote the further development of such international practices, customs, and institutions as will assure permanent good relations and peace, prevent strife and war, check the current ruinous rivalry in building armaments, and deliver, with as little delay as possible, the people from the heavy and rapidly increasing burdens of the "armed peace."

The peace party of the country, and indeed of the world, appreciates intensely the attitude which the

Administration has taken, and may be depended upon to support, heart and soul, the most advanced measures which it may be possible to take to secure these important ends. It is needless to say that it will take time and much deliberation and careful planning to bring these great measures to even partial realization, but the Administration may be assured that the true friends of peace throughout the nation, while most anxious to see something done speedily, will be duly patient and sympathetic.

The task which lies before the President and his colleagues in this direction is one of the most noble and inspiring, and at the same time most difficult, with which an Administration has ever been confronted. We may well all pray that special divine light and wisdom may be granted them, and, above all, the unfaltering courage to do their duty as God has given them to see it.

"Drunkenness over Armaments."

The foregoing expression has been used by a German daily, *The Frankfurter Zeitung*, to characterize the new access of military delirium in Germany. It is none too strong, and applies equally well to all of the group of European military powers.

There seems to be no extreme to which the army and navy promoters, either in government or out of it, are not ready to go on the slightest provocation—indeed, without any provocation at all. The stupendous cost, the ultimate relative uselessness of the increases, the final catastrophe and ruin if the thing goes on, all go for nothing when the spasm is on. Everything that is vital in the national life is sacrificed without hesitation, that the military and naval defenses, on which the safety of the country is assumed chiefly to depend, may be kept strong enough to meet any imagined emergency.

Such spasms of fright and mad rushes to increase armaments as those now occurring in Europe belong to the very nature of the system of competitive armaments. They are inevitable, and no one should be surprised when they come. As soon as one power is thrown into a position of comparative superiority, for no matter what reason, shivers of fear run through all the rest, and the hammers at once begin to bang in the navy construction yards and new regiments are summoned to the colors in other countries. No delusion can be greater than that of those who believe, if they do believe, that assurance of security and freedom from attack and disaster can be procured on the lines of competing armaments. The natural fruit of such a policy is, and always will be, suspicion, fear, false alarms, and pitiable panics.

The only way to avoid these is to destroy the system of competitive armaments.

The causes of the present European flurry are not altogether clear; but the chief factor seems to be the sudden and unexpected success of the Balkan allies in crushing Turkey. This has brought the Slav States of southeastern Europe, which are closely connected with Russia, into sudden military prominence, and Germany, whose ambitions in regard to that territory are well known, has taken alarm and decided immediately to increase her great army, and is considering the building of additional fortifications on her eastern boundary next to Russia. Her military program, adopted a number of years ago, runs out this year. She has decided, therefore, to enter upon a new program of army enlargement which will add an additional cost of \$250,000,000 the first year, and thereafter at least \$50,000,000 annually. Her standing army will be increased from something over 600,000 men to over 800,000. France has at once responded by deciding to add nearly 200,000 men to her standing army, with a like increase in the budget, and by increasing the period of enlistment of her soldiers from two to three years. Russia, of course, takes a similar step, and has decided to add three army corps to her military force, and the Austro-Hungarian government follows. The effect on England has been almost instantaneous. The movement for universal military service is being pushed forward with all possible energy. The naval program for the coming year, as introduced by the government on March 13, provides for five battleships, as against four last year, and a corresponding number of cruisers, destroyers, etc. The total budget amounts to £46,309,300 (in round numbers about \$230,000,000). This is the greatest navy budget ever laid out by the British government in time of peace. The increase over last year is about fourteen and one-half millions of dollars. New schemes of taxation are being devised in the different countries by which the huge sums for the army and the navy may be raised.

It is difficult to comprehend how the statesmen who control the destinies of these great powers can, with apparent coolness, undertake another step of this kind in the mad rivalry which has long been going on among the European powers. It seems as if the lowest dictates of common sense would have caused them to seize the occasion for holding a European conference with a view to resisting the growth of their armaments rather than to heap further burdens upon their peoples.

The only hopeful factor in the entire situation is the prompt and energetic protests which are being made against this new building program. The Free Church Council of Great Britain, representing all the Protestant bodies of England outside of the National Church, in its recent meeting at Newcastle, adopted unanimously a resolution protesting against the program of conscription "which would harness the nation irrevocably to the forces that would send it rattling back into barbarism." The action of the council is supported by all the peace forces in England.

In France a stormy scene occurred in the Chamber of Deputies on the afternoon of March 6, when the bill for reintroducing the three-year military service instead of two was brought forward. The Socialist party, seconded by some forty Radicals, declared that the new budget "was insanity." The uproar became so great that it was impossible for the president of the chamber to restore order. The War Minister endeavored in vain for some time to read the text of the bill, and when he left the tribune the opponents of the bill hurled violent language at him. The opposition to this new measure is sure to develop rapidly in all the countries, and it may well be asked whether the system of competitive armaments, which does not hesitate to suck the very life-blood out of the nation, is not entering rapidly upon its last stage. The friends of peace in Europe, and in all other countries, ought promptly to seize the occasion for declaring anew their unalterable opposition to the whole system of "armed peace" and the motives and policies out of which the great armaments spring.

The St. Louis Peace Congress.

The Fourth American Peace Congress, to be held in St. Louis May 1, 2, 3, and 4, and already referred to several times in our columns, promises to be a most significant gathering. If for no other reason than that it is wholly under the direction of the Business Men's League of that city, the unique significance of the congress is assured. No other American peace congress has had such an initial backing, and no other has aroused an interest among chambers of commerce and kindred organizations equal to that already awakened by this. Furthermore, nearly all of the governments of the western hemisphere are to be represented, Congressman Bartholdt, president of the Congress, having personally invited the official representatives of the twenty other American republics, practically all of whom have agreed to attend. A number of Canadian delegates are also sure to be present. While President Wilson has not yet fully decided as to himself, it is assured that either he or Secretary Bryan will be there. Mr. Carnegie has definitely promised that he will deliver an address. Our clipping bureau convinces us that it is probably true that none of the other American peace congresses has had the early publicity which this is receiving.

THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE has always watched with great interest the new workers for international peace invariably brought forth by these gatherings. They have already begun to appear as a result of the effort in St. Louis. Frederick W. Lehmann, best known as United States Solicitor General under the Taft administration, is the chairman of the Committee on International Law. Associated with him is the Hon. Frederick M. Judson, one of the arbiters in the recent celebrated railroad case. A. Ross Hill, president of the University of Missouri, is chairman of the Education